

**AGENDA:** February 11, 2003

**7.1**

**CATEGORY:** Unfinished Business

**DEPT.:** Public Works

**TITLE:** Evelyn Avenue Reconstruction—Phase III  
(Pioneer Way to Bernardo Avenue),  
Project 01-48—Authorize Bidding

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. Approve plans and specifications for Evelyn Avenue Construction, Project 01-48, and authorize staff to advertise the project for bids.
2. Appropriate \$96,000 in street improvement fees received to date for Evelyn Avenue Construction, Project 01-48, and increase the project budget by the same amount. (Five votes required)

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The Evelyn Avenue Improvements Construction, Project 01-48, is funded as part of the 2000-01 Capital Improvement Program. The approved budget for the project is \$5,915,000, of which \$2,300,000 is from a County Measure A/B Grant, \$1,842,000 from the CIP Reserve Fund, \$1,173,000 from Construction/Real Property Conveyance Tax Fund, \$200,000 from Gas Tax, \$200,000 from Wastewater Revenue Fund and \$200,000 from the Annual Sidewalk Replacement Program.

The total project cost estimate is currently \$6,485,000. This is \$570,000 above the current project funding. This amount is attributable to a higher cost for street right-of-way acquisition. The City received \$96,000 in street improvement fees from property owners of three parcels and staff recommends appropriating these proceeds and increasing the project budget to \$6,011,000. This leaves a projected net project shortfall of \$474,000.

Staff recommends advertising the project with several alternative bid items to provide cost reduction flexibility. A favorable low bid, plus the alternative items, could bring the project cost very close to the adjusted budget. Over time, proceeds from future sale of the surplus land from right-of-way acquisition and future property owner reimbursements for right-of-way and street improvement (about \$1,430,000) will more than offset the current funding shortfall.

## **BACKGROUND**

On January 28, 2003, the City Council considered soliciting bids for the last phase of the Evelyn Avenue improvements and directed staff to review the roadway design for cost-saving opportunities and return to Council with options that include deleting the raised median and reducing landscaping and possibly travel lanes. The Council also asked for a breakdown of the estimated construction costs. The January 28, 2003 staff report is included as Attachment 1.

The Evelyn Avenue improvement project has a long history dating back to about the 1980s. Attachment 2 is a chronology of events, including City Council actions, community involvement and major decision points, regarding this project. Both the 1982 and 1992 City General Plans called for improving Evelyn Avenue to a four-lane arterial street. The 1994 Evelyn Avenue Corridor Study recommended widening Evelyn Avenue to four lanes to provide a through route to downtown and reroute traffic from neighborhood streets. The City Code also designates Evelyn Avenue as a four-lane arterial street with an 86' right-of-way width.

From 1980 to 1990, improvements to Evelyn Avenue were deferred due to changing traffic conditions and other planning activities along the corridor. With the advancement of Tasman Light Rail, the Downtown Transit Center, Stevens Creek Trail Reach 3 and Highway 85 widening, between Dana Street and Route 101 in the mid-1990s, interest in improving Evelyn Avenue reactivated, leading to the City Council's 1998 approval of the roadway geometrics and a three-phase Evelyn Avenue improvement project.

Evelyn Avenue is a major east-west arterial serving traffic to and from the east and provides direct access to Highway 85 and Highway 237 (via Moorpark Way), as well as the Light Rail Transit Stations and park-and-ride lots. It is also a major entry to Mountain View and the downtown. The justification for a four-lane Evelyn Avenue was reconfirmed by traffic projections from the City's 1992 traffic forecast model. At that time, Evelyn Avenue east of Highway 85 was carrying about 10,500 vehicles per day. A two-lane road can accommodate this volume. The traffic model projected that at build-out of the City General Plan, Evelyn Avenue would carry between 20,000 and 24,000 vehicles per day. At this volume, a four-lane roadway is appropriate. For comparison, Attachment 3 is a list of other four-lane City streets and their current traffic volumes.

While traffic volumes on Evelyn Avenue have not yet reached the projected magnitude, traffic volume on Evelyn Avenue is increasing. A Year 2000 traffic count on the existing two-lane Evelyn Avenue, between Bernardo Avenue and Moorpark Way, showed 16,000 vehicles per day. At this volume, the roadway becomes congested and drivers from adjacent properties have difficulty turning into or out of their driveways. Traffic on Evelyn Avenue is increasing despite few recent land use changes along this corridor. The General Plan encour-

ages more housing along the Evelyn Avenue corridor which will generate even more traffic than the current light industrial use, further justifying the need for a four-lane Evelyn Avenue. Therefore, the 1998 City Council action approving a four-lane Evelyn Avenue is based on existing and anticipated conditions and consistent with previous planning efforts.

Evelyn Avenue improvements to Pioneer Way will be finished by this spring. Completing the improvements to the City limits at Bernardo Avenue will bring the roadway fully to modern standards with bicycle lanes, increase capacity to serve present and future traffic demands, correct drainage deficiencies, improve safety and provide an attractive entrance into the City and downtown.

### **ANALYSIS**

Attachment 4 is a breakdown of the \$6,485,000 estimated total project cost and Attachment 5 is a breakdown of the estimated construction cost for Evelyn Avenue Phase III improvements as currently designed and conforms to the 1998 City Council approval. The largest construction cost component is pavement-related work estimated at about \$2.3 million, which is fully charged to Mountain View's allocation of County Measure A/B funds. These funds can only be spent on pavement work. Other components of the construction, such as curbs, gutters, sidewalks, medians, landscaping, streetlights and signals, are funded by the City General Fund, Utility Fund and Gas Tax Fund.

The amount of discretionary funds available in the Evelyn Avenue Improvements Phase III project that potentially could be used for other projects is about \$2,500,000, as outlined in Attachment 4 (\$2.3 million in General Fund for construction and about \$200,000 in unspent General Fund programmed for project management/construction support). All other budgeted funds are either spent, encumbered or are nondiscretionary.

The January 28, 2003 staff memo presented several cost-saving deletions or substitutions to the current design that would be included as alternate bid items in the bid documents. A favorable low bid, plus one or more alternate items, could bring the project cost to within the adjusted budget of \$6,011,000.

As directed, staff has further reviewed the current design and identified two additional cost-saving options for the Council's consideration. These options are shown in Attachment 6.

Option 1 (Four Lanes with Unimproved Medians) would build Evelyn Avenue to four lanes as designed but without raised medians and median landscaping. The median area (varies between 6' and 16') would be left unpaved and planted with erosion-control grasses, except at left-turn areas where paving will be provided. Drainage inlets, paved shoulders and guard-rails in the unimproved median will be added where appropriate for safety. Allowing

\$100,000 for these safety items and deleting the medians and median landscaping will have a net saving of about \$550,000. In addition, reducing the size of the mitigation trees from 72" box size to 24" box size would save an additional \$80,000 for a total savings of \$630,000. If this option is selected, some redesign must be done and staff estimates the redesign cost to be about \$70,000 and take about six to seven weeks to prepare. The net savings from Option 1 is \$560,000 and all of it accrued to the General Fund. This option maximizes expenditure of County Measure A/B funds. With this option, if raised medians are desired in the future, they could be added back without significant impact on the permanent improvements. However, these improvements installed at a later date would likely be more expensive and would cause some traffic disruption during construction. This option would also result in an "unfinished" appearance inconsistent with other City arterials.

Option 2 (Two Lanes with Unimproved Median) would reduce the travel lanes to one in each direction and also delete the raised medians and median landscaping. The width of the unimproved median varies from 6' to 30'. As with Option 1, safety features in the median will be added as appropriate (roughly \$100,000 in cost) and reducing the size of the mitigation trees from 72" box size to 24" box size would yield additional savings of \$80,000. Although this option results in greater total savings (\$1,330,000), only \$630,000 will be General Fund savings. A greater portion of the savings (\$700,000) is from reducing pavement and lowering the expenditure of County funds. While the savings in County funds could be used to maintain pavements of other streets, Evelyn Avenue has the highest priority of any street in the City for pavement maintenance because such effort has been deferred for so many years. Option 2 will also necessitate redesign at a cost of about \$70,000. The estimated net savings from Option 2 is roughly \$1,260,000. Of this net amount, about \$560,000 for deleting the raised landscaped medians would be General Fund savings and the remainder, \$700,000 for reduced pavement, would be savings against the County measure funds. Staff does not recommend Option 2 because savings to the General Fund are not any greater than for Option 1 and the future cost to add the travel lanes, if needed, is anticipated to be significantly higher than the current cost for the work. In addition, after October 2004, projects creating more than 5,000 square feet of impervious surface must comply with new Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements on managing and controlling storm water runoffs and potentially increasing the cost for new pavement projects.

Attachment 7 is a comparison of the potential savings for the base project (as presented in January 23, 2003 with bid alternate items) and for Options 1 and 2.

#### Risk to County Measure A/B Funds

The County half-cent Sales Tax Measure A/B to fund transportation improvements was approved by the voters in 1996. A portion of the revenues was distributed to the cities for pavement maintenance. The Council specifically directed, as part of the capital improvement

planning process, to set aside \$2,300,000 of Measure A/B funds for the Evelyn Avenue Phase III project to cover the estimated cost for pavement-related work. These moneys must be spent by June 2004. However, because of the current economic climate, the County and VTA are reviewing potential reallocation of these funds. While there are no specific reallocation plans at present, it is prudent to encumber these funds as soon as possible. More importantly, we need to commence construction before this summer to allow sufficient construction time to complete the project and claim the County funds no later than June 2004.

### **CONCLUSION**

Staff recommends proceeding with the current project as designed and advertising the project for bids with the originally proposed alternate delete and substitution items (see January 28, 2003 staff report) to lower construction cost. The current design complies with prior City Council actions and the City General Plan. If approved, staff will return to Council in March or April to recommend awarding a contract with one or more alternate bid items to close the funding gap as explained in staff's January 28, 2003 memo attached.

Alternatively, the City Council may consider Option 1, Four Lanes with Unimproved Medians, in combination with smaller mitigation trees. This combination will provide a net savings of about \$560,000 to the General Fund but will delay advertising by six to seven weeks. Accounting for this delay, staff believes it is still possible to commence construction by this summer. If City Council selects Option 1, staff recommends the Council authorize staff to redesign the project as shown in Option 1, appropriate \$70,000 for redesign, approve the revised plans and specifications, and authorize staff to advertise the project for bids. This Council action will enable staff to advertise the project immediately after redesign to save time and call for bids before the approaching summer construction season when the bidding climate is less favorable.

**AGENDA:** February 11, 2003

**PAGE:** 6

**PUBLIC NOTICING**—Agenda posting.

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- Attachments:
1. January 28, 2003 Staff Report
  2. Evelyn Avenue Improvements Chronology
  3. List of Four-Lane City Streets and Current Traffic Volumes
  4. Breakdown of Estimated Total Project Cost
  5. Breakdown of Estimated Construction Cost
  6. Evelyn Avenue Improvement Options
  7. Comparison of Potential Savings by Project Options